



A Service of the
Children's Bureau

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF



Engaging Fathers in Services

Rodrick was behind in child support payments. He had been in and out of jail and substance use treatment for the past three years, and he was having difficulty securing a job and affordable housing. He mostly relied on the good will of friends to obtain shelter. He hadn't seen his two children in over a year due to their mother's insistence that he was no good for them. After bumping into a mutual friend, he learned that his children had been placed in foster care almost six months earlier due to claims of child abuse from their mother's new boyfriend. No one had reached out to Rodrick before placing the children in out-of-home care, nor had he been updated about his son's newly diagnosed learning disability.

What is Father Engagement?

In the last decade, great interest has arisen regarding the influence of fathers on the well-being of children.¹ Notions of fatherhood have moved beyond that of men acting simply as financial providers or "breadwinners". Fathers are now expected to offer more caregiving, emotional support, discipline, protection, and moral guidance, in addition to coordinating activities and serving as a link to extended family and the community.³

The rising number of children, particularly low-income, minority children, being raised by single mothers, has contributed to the growing absence and disengagement of fathers from their children's lives⁴. This trend has served to promulgate discussions around the importance of engaged fathers. According to a U.S. Census Bureau report, in 2011, 24 percent of children were living with a single mother (biological, step, or adoptive), compared to 4 percent of children living with a single father.⁵ This study also noted that 41 percent of children living with a single parent live below the poverty line. The Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation reports a poverty rate of 47.6 percent for children living in female headed single parent household.⁶

The federal government has begun allocating millions of dollars in grants and funding toward nationwide programs that strengthen two-parent families, promote healthy marriage, encourage responsible fatherhood and increase father engagement.^{1,7} Through these initiatives, the Office of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) allocated \$150 million to a network of 121 organizations in 47 states to provide wide-ranging marriage, relationship, and responsible parenting education programs and services to improve the general well-being of children and their parents.^{7,9}

The Community-Centered Healthy Marriage and Relationship Grant Program (Healthy Marriage)

- The Healthy Marriage Program funds organizations that combine marriage and relationship education efforts with a robust effort to address participation barriers and the economic stability needs of their participants.

<https://hmr.acf.hhs.gov/whats-new/healthy-marriage/>

The Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Grant Program (Pathways)

- The Pathways Program funds projects that integrate robust economic stability services, healthy marriage activities, and activities designed to foster responsible parenting.

<https://hmr.acf.hhs.gov/whats-new/responsible-fatherhood/>

Benefits of Paternal Engagement

Much research points to the positive impact that a father or father figure can have in the life of a child.

Children with involved, caring fathers:

- achieve better educational outcomes;^{10,11,12,13}
- are more confident and emotionally secure;^{11,12}
- have higher level cognitive and social skills;^{10,11,12,13}
- have better self-control and improved self-esteem;¹⁰
- are less likely to experience depression;^{11,12}
- have a greater capacity for empathy and experience more positive interactions with siblings;¹⁰

- are less likely to become involved in delinquent or criminal activity or substance use;^{11,12}
- and are more curious and secure, exhibiting positive gains in early language, exploratory behavior and problem solving skills.¹⁴

Fathers, more so than mothers, tend to engage with their children in physical, stimulating, playful activities^{10,11} Such interactions teach children to regulate their feelings and behavior; and the “roughhousing” that children engage in with their fathers teaches them how to manage aggression and physical contact, while still maintaining emotional control.¹¹ This roughhousing helps children to develop skills that are important throughout childhood and into adulthood – skills such as independence and risk taking.¹⁵ Positive father involvement in the family serves to improve the family’s financial status and self-sufficiency.¹¹ Furthermore, in cases of maltreatment or CPS involvement, children with involved fathers experience shorter stays in foster care.



A mother also benefits when a father (or father figure) is more engaged in the home and the life of her children. She experiences an increase in patience, flexibility and emotional responsiveness toward her children, and sees overall positive outcomes for her children and their well-being.¹⁶ Benefits to fathers from greater involvement include:

- a more positive father-child relationship;
- increased self-confidence and satisfaction from parenting;
- a higher level of empathy and understanding towards others;
- increased resiliency in stressful situations;^{10,12,15}
- and the ability to feel greater pride and find more meaning and joy from life.¹⁴

Involved fathers are also more likely to engage in community and service oriented activities, and to be more social and involved in extended family interactions.¹²

Effects Associated with Poor Paternal Engagement

Research indicates poor father-child relationships or a lack of father involvement can result in detrimental effects to children's well-being. Children in homes with absent fathers have a greater likelihood of:

- living in poverty;
- becoming involved in criminal activity;
- engaging in substance use;
- suffering from emotional or behavioral problems;
- having poor academic performance;
- dropping out of school;
- and committing suicide.^{17,12}

Adolescents in father-absent homes also face a higher risk of experiencing abuse or neglect, and they may also engage in early sexual activity.¹² One study linked low father involvement with significantly reduced self-reported life satisfaction in teenage boys; another study associated a higher prevalence of anxiety, phobias, bipolar and other mental health disorders in adulthood with poor quality early father-child relationships.¹⁰



Causes of Low Engagement

Specific stressors or life circumstances impact a father's capacity to engage and build a close relationship with his children. These include:

- *Spousal conflict, separation and divorce*
In cases where the parents do not cohabitate and there is parental conflict, the custodial parent (usually the mother) can assert control over the amount of access that the non-custodial parent has to the children.⁷
- *Previously modeled father-son relationships*
The relationship of a man with his father can also influence the quality of the bond he has with his children; thus, a man not close to his father, or whose father was absent, is less likely to define fathering as a nurturing, caring, encouraging role.¹⁰
- *Adverse circumstances like unemployment, mental illness, substance use, and domestic violence*^{18,19}
Not only do these adverse circumstances affect the stability of a couple's relationship, but they can further result in poor parenting, child maltreatment, social isolation, less responsiveness to children, and less time spent with children.²⁰
- *Incarceration*
The separation between a father and his children that results from incarceration makes maintaining a strong father-child bond difficult. Because parents are aware of how traumatizing a prison visit can be to their children, they may opt to avoid visits altogether, which can result in reduced paternal involvement following release from prison.²⁰

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF

- *Child welfare involvement*

According to one study, only 54% of children in foster care had contact with their father over the period of one year compared to 72% of kids in the general public.³⁰ This lack of involvement by fathers can be attributed to societal reasons like poverty and discrimination, and to personal challenges like unemployment, lack of housing, and insufficient parenting skills; however, it can also be attributed to involvement with the child welfare system. A non-resident father may want to avoid coming into contact with child welfare for different reasons — for example, he may owe child support and be fearful of repercussions from child welfare.¹¹ In cases where the father is a parolee/ex-offender, he may want to evade contact with any entity that he feels could subject him to questioning by law enforcement.¹¹ In addition, the father could feel a lack of trust towards the child welfare system due to a past negative experience, or because he senses that child welfare does not consider his needs but favors the mother's.¹¹

Welfare agency “practices” and “policies” can also play a role in father involvement by directing bias and exclusion toward fathers. Such bias can be attributed to the child welfare system's traditional focus on the relationship between mothers and children.^{11,21,26,31}

Although child welfare agencies are becoming more aware of the importance of fathers to a child's well-being, this awareness generally fails to manifest in practice for reasons such as:

- caseload size;
- difficulty locating fathers;
- discomfort in working with men;
- lack of institutional support¹¹



Further practices and barriers to a father's involvement within the child welfare system include:

- the assumption that mothers are the “sole protectors” of their children and trusted as the gatekeepers to the children;
- concealment of a father's identity by the mother to avoid losing financial or housing assistance;
- social workers adopting a view of fathers as being all good or all bad based on past experiences.^{31,26}
- a reluctance by caseworkers to contact fathers due to concerns of exposing the child to problems such as intimate partner violence or drug use; and also worries that taking on complicated cases will increase their workload.¹³

Particular protocols and procedures can further unintentionally discount fathers. Staff may not be trained adequately on the appropriate processes to contact an absent father.³¹ Moreover, although agencies may use gender neutral language on forms and paperwork such as ‘parent’ or ‘protective parent’, workers may instinctively note the mother as the key contact under ‘parent’ and make little or no effort to contact the father. Using more specific labels like ‘mother’ and ‘father’ could serve as a reminder to workers to reach out to the father in addition to, or as an alternative to the mother.

Additionally, the movement towards improving efficiency in the public and non-profit sector by emphasizing outcome measures, such as the timeliness of completing assessments or the number of parents referred to services, has left social workers feeling pressured and overburdened.³² Such a focus on efficiency over effectiveness can result in workers feeling like they just don't have the time and resources to seek out or try to establish a relationship with an absent or non-custodial father.

Interventions to Promote Father Engagement

Father engagement and responsible fatherhood programs generally revolve around creating and maintaining ongoing father-child relationships with the intention of achieving better outcomes for fathers, families, and the overall well-being of children.¹ Programs can vary depending on the population being served; many programs target non-custodial fathers, while others focus on improving relationships and co-parenting skills between married or cohabitating couples or former partners.

Typical outcomes targeted by various programs may include:

- securing employment;
- promoting self-sufficiency;
- developing healthy relationships;
- becoming responsible fathers;
- improving mental health;
- reducing risky behaviors;
- and reducing recidivism.¹

Programs targeting non-custodial fathers from low-income backgrounds may center their services on helping fathers gain employment or on working with the courts around matters of child support, along with offering group-based classes emphasizing parenting or relationship skills.^{7,22} Additional supports for this population (and fathers in general) may include:

- parent education focused on the benefits to children and families of father involvement, and on instilling fathers with the skills and strategies to better support and engage with their children;
- help (such as tutoring assistance) with completing diploma, certification or college degree requirements – i.e. GED, high school diploma, 2 or 4-year degree, etc.;
- job preparation training such as resume building, mock interviews, appropriate telephone communication, skills development, letter writing skills, and job placement assistance;



- substance use counseling;
- mediation services;
- anger management;
- crisis intervention;
- intimate partner violence education;
- and general health and nutrition counseling.²²

Programs that focus on relationship skills work on helping couples or former partners become more proficient at communicating, managing conflict, and being supportive of one another.⁷ Ultimately, the goal is to improve the family's relationship in order to ensure the social/emotional security of children through:

- strengthening co-parenting or cooperative parenting;
- alleviating the children's exposure to parental conflict;
- experiencing a father's increased willingness to engage in family life and parent the child;
- seeing improvements in the quality of parenting by the mother or father due to a better climate in the home⁷

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF

According to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, model fatherhood programs should include the following components:²³

- *Use culturally appropriate teaching methods and materials, and, when possible, hire staff members who are similar to the target population. Consider the needs of the specific populations being served.*^{1,23} Participants can relate more to staff members when they share the same personal background, culture, gender, age, living environment, etc. Fathers may respond better to male staff members and feel more at ease opening up and sharing personal problems or fears. Also, consider that cultural norms about what constitutes a good father may vary from one population to another.²³ For example, in some cultures, the father's role is traditionally that of disciplinarian; in other cultures, the father's main role is to be the breadwinner or provider.
- *Have a low staff to participation ratio, and establish clear program goals and targeted curricula.*²³ Programs with low staff to participant ratios have lower attrition rates. Also, consider targeting program goals to focus on a smaller number of issues rather than trying to cover the multitude of factors that can negatively influence a father's parenting.²³ Specific curricula can include: bonding and engaging with children, employability, legal aid, managing finances, conflict resolution and communication skills.²³ Targeted goals help a father understand how a program addresses his particular needs increasing the chances of his participating in the program.
- *Use different teaching methods that are focused on addressing fathers as individuals.*²³ Programs should move away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach that is solely focused on group workshops. Rather, individualized case management services should be provided in addition to small group sessions.⁷ Particular teaching methods can be used depending on factors like the participant's age, ethnicity, and relationship status.
- *Allocate enough time to complete core program activities.*²³ Participants need time to internalize and adopt lessons and techniques learned in the program – such as job interview skills or co-parenting strategies. Effective programs should run for a period of several months.²³
- *One-on-one interaction between staff and participating fathers is very important.*²³ Having clinicians engage with dads one-on-one offers staff the opportunity to connect with clients on a deeper level. The staff can move beyond discussing material covered in typical program sessions and adjust counseling services and treatment plans to address the individual needs of fathers. This encourages a deeper level of trust and engagement by fathers. These fathers may also feel freer to open up about certain issues, and be more open to receiving referrals and advice from staff.
- *Offer incentives to encourage participation by dads.*²³ Financial incentives such as money or gift cards for diapers, food, toys etc., can be effective in encouraging program participation.^{7,23,24} Some programs also use raffles as incentives. Non-financial incentives like child care or vouchers for food and/or transportation can help reduce barriers to care.



Evidence-based Program Highlight

Supporting Father Involvement

Committed to the enhancement and strengthening of services to children and families through supporting the involvement of appropriate fathers in children's lives.

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/supporting-father-involvement/>

<http://www.familyresourcecenters.net/projects-2/supporting-father-involvement/>

Professionals and practitioners involved in providing family services, child welfare and systems of care planning can also adopt various approaches to engage fathers:

Create Awareness

Encouraging fathers to participate in programs can be a challenge. In one study, urban African American fathers reported being unaware of the existence of programs.²⁴ In other cases, there is the perception that parenting classes are for mothers. Fathers may feel that being involved in parenting programs or father support group reflects negatively on their parenting ability or even their masculinity. Some fathers may also prefer to seek parenting support from more informal sources such as friends or relatives.²⁴ To promote program awareness in the community, staff can:

- encourage men already participating in programs to recruit other men (friends, family, etc.) by means of discussing their own positive experiences;^{15,24}
- distribute multi-language brochures, flyers and postcards, along with utilizing more visible means like billboard ads, television, radio and newspaper advertisements, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.);^{24,22}
- present to community groups;
- host community events (i.e. family picnics and barbecues) and forums to discuss the program and highlight program goals and success stories;²²
- and promote workshops and activities that may be of interest to fathers such as: How to Complete Job Applications, Finding Affordable Housing, Starting a Small Business, Achieving Family Economic Success,²⁵ Becoming a New Dad.



Whatever the means of promotion, it is important that the message focuses on educating dads about the benefits to their children, their families, and themselves, of being involved with their children.

Recruitment

Fathers can be recruited from places where men typically congregate such as barbershops, basketball courts, pool halls, and recreation centers. Other avenues of recruitment can be through the courts, prisoner reentry programs, community partners, employment offices, libraries, trade schools, churches, social service agencies and work-places.^{15,22,26} Recruitment strategies should be adapted to appeal to different cultures and demographics.^{24,22} African-American fathers in one focus group indicated wanting to see a reflection of themselves and their families on brochures.

Staffing

The training and quality of staff, along with their commitment, efforts, and understanding of the value of engaging men are key factors that can influence a father's commitment to initiate or maintain involvement in a program.^{22,27} Hiring and training practices are important considerations, as are routine professional development opportunities, supervision, coaching, and ongoing support for current staff. Front-line employees should be alerted to the organization's fatherhood engagement efforts and the important role they play in setting a tone of inclusion.

Training staff on providing excellent customer service (i.e., offering a friendly greeting, smiling, making eye contact, and recognizing someone by name) can make fathers feel respected and welcome.¹⁴ Staff should also have experience working with diverse cultures and be able to address the needs of men from disadvantaged backgrounds such as ex-offenders or men with substance use histories.²⁸

Engaging with Fathers

Being able to communicate and engage with fathers is important in any capacity – whether these efforts are specific to a fatherhood program or to other types of programs or services. Following are some recommendations to facilitate engaging with fathers and to become more responsive to their needs:

- Ask fathers how they currently engage with their children, what type of help they may need from staff, or what type of services they require;
- Receive continual input from fathers regarding goals that they hope to achieve from participating in the program and make adjustments as needed;
- Avoid sending the message that completing the program is the absolute objective – rather, emphasize with fathers that the change process is within their control, and that efforts at improvement continue beyond the last class or workshop;
- Alert fathers of upcoming sessions or meetings through phone calls, emails and text messages, and do not assume disinterest if they are not present at appointments;

American Humane Association: What Dads Can Do With Their Kids

This website provides a list of age-appropriate activities dads can do with their children at each developmental stage.

www.americanhumane.org/children/programs/fatherhood-initiative/what-dads-can-do.html

- Follow up with dads to determine reasons for non-attendance and to offer assistance, if necessary, to ensure future attendance.¹⁵
- Include fathers in appointments, family conferences, case planning and parenting assessments (unless there is a threat of violence to the mother and children).³² In child welfare cases, sufficient time should be taken and diligent efforts should be made to locate, contact and engage non-resident fathers as early in the process as possible.^{21,30,26}
- Child welfare should routinely involve the father in protection and supervision orders; unless the father is the perpetrator, in which case he should be informed regarding changes he needs to make.
- Provide the father with information and choices about how to be involved, keep him up-to-date about what is happening with a case, and educate him about his legal rights.^{31,32} It is also important to provide him with explanations regarding how different circumstances (e.g. criminal charges, immigration status, child support payments, etc.) may impact his case.

Self-assessment for practitioners regarding perceptions about father engagement:¹⁵

1. How do you acknowledge a father's presence during a meeting, and do you include the father in the conversation when the mother (or other caregiver) is present?
2. Are you using body language that reflects inclusion?
3. Do you make eye contact with the father, or do you just focus on the mother/other caregiver?
4. Do you respond directly to the father if he has a question regarding his child, or do you direct your response to the mother/other caregiver?
5. What are your personal beliefs about the role of fathers in raising children?

Father Engagement and Father Involvement Toolkit: A Guide to Implementing, Monitoring, and Sustaining Innovative Practice

A great one-stop shop to help develop a fatherhood program at your agency. Includes engagement, assessment, and planning tools.

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/father-engagement-and-father-involvement-toolkit-guide-implementing-monitoring-and-sustaining>

More on Program/Service Considerations for Father Engagement

- When providing any sort of children's services, make every effort possible to include fathers from the start, assuming that the father is known and available, can be located, and that he is not barred from having contact with his children due to issues of abuse/maltreatment.
- Try to engage fathers in any discussion that involves the provision of a service or particular course of treatment for their child; or emphasize with the mother, if she is the primary caretaker, that the father's involvement is vital.^{15,29}
- Engage fathers in discussions about what being a good dad means to them and what their dreams and aspirations are for themselves and their children.¹¹
- Educate mothers/caregivers about the important roles of fathers, and engage them in father recruitment efforts. When appointments are made, ask the mother/caregiver "Will Dad be a part of the meeting?", "Can Dad be sent an invitation if he isn't present in the household?"²⁹
- Verify the father's work schedule, and try to arrange meetings during times that are convenient for him.²⁹ If the dad is unable to attend, get his input and/or concerns prior to the meeting, and follow up with a call after the meeting to provide him with feedback.^{15,29}



- Use a strengths-based approach focusing on fathers capabilities instead of their deficits.¹⁵ At every opportunity, emphasize with fathers their important role in their children's lives and the benefits of their involvement to their children's well-being.¹⁵
- Treat mothers and fathers equally. Offer fathers the same types of services that are offered to mothers – i.e. housing assistance, legal aid, substance use counseling, job placement, and mental health services.^{11,30}
- Consider and include others who may be the "father-figure" in a child's life – i.e. uncles, grandfathers, stepfathers, etc.¹⁵

Father Friendly Check-Up

by the National Fatherhood Initiative

A tool to assess the degree to which your organization's policies, programs and services encourage father involvement.

<http://www.fatherhood.org/ffcu>

The Project Fatherhood Model

This model attempts to re-engage low-income fathers in urban settings in the care and upbringing of their children.

<http://www.projectfatherhood.org/>

Supplemental Supports for Fathers Who Use Substances

Men struggling with substance use report emotional issues that stem from their own childhoods where they faced situations of abuse, abandonment by their fathers, and a lack of positive male role models.³⁷ A man in substance use treatment can also experience feelings of shame and failure as a parent or spouse/partner. Such feelings may contribute to his depression, impact his ability to parent and be successfully involved with his children,¹⁸ and lead him to choose to isolate himself from his children and family.³⁷

Some suggestions providers can offer men in recovery to help them rebuild their relationship with their children and family include:

- Encourage them to work with recovery coaches who share their background/experience and to join a support group of recovering fathers³⁷
- Offer referrals to medical professionals specializing in treating substance use.
- Recommend therapy and parenting programs, and provide fathers with appropriate referrals and contact information.³⁷



- Engage men in discussions about parenting issues from the point of intake, and support any efforts they may be making to be more intentional parents.³⁴
- Discuss expectations and let fathers know that recovery is a process that can take time.³⁷ Remind them often of the ultimate benefits they, their children, and their family will experience as a result of their continued efforts.

Supplemental Supports for Incarcerated Fathers

The physical and emotional separation between incarcerated fathers and their children often leads to a weakened bond that can be difficult to repair following the father's release from prison. Factors such as geographic location, limited visiting hours, transportation issues, physical restrictions, humiliating visiting procedures and a lack of privacy can serve as barriers to visits and communication with family.³⁸ Emotional and relational factors can also influence whether a connection will be maintained during imprisonment. For example, the mother/caregiver may feel hostility toward the imprisoned parent; or there may be a history of abuse or intimate partner violence and concerns about safety.³⁹ Further, being in a prison setting can be a traumatic experience, and a mother (and sometimes even the imprisoned father) may choose to avoid exposing the child to this potentially stressful environment.^{38,40} Due to all of these factors, the reunification period for the family can be difficult upon the release from prison. Although couples may go through a "honeymoon" period where they get reacquainted, eventually, issues may begin to arise that can strain the relationship, such as:

- The wife/partner may become resentful of a partner who desires to reassert his power and control over the household.³⁸
- Healthy patterns of communication may be impeded by the man, who is accustomed to repressing his emotions in prison, and by his spouse/partner, who may harbor feelings of resentment, fear and disappointment toward her partner.³⁸

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF

- The stress of reentry may draw a man back to his old friends and criminal lifestyle, which can erode any level of trust and hope his children and spouse/partner may have had in his reformation.³⁸
- Additional stressors such as finding employment, housing, paying child support, having a strained or severed relationship with his child's mother, or a new father figure in the child's life, and even psychological changes that can result from imprisonment (e.g. depression, anxiety, low self-esteem) can further impact the man's ability to establish a bond or renew a relationship with his children and parent or co-parent effectively.³⁸

Agencies working with families can undertake the following best practices to support children and families in cases of a father's incarceration:

- Train staff to be knowledgeable about the criminal justice system and community programs available for families dealing with incarceration.³⁹
- Incorporate questions about incarceration into routine screenings and assessments in order to target families that may need special services or referrals.³⁹
- Work with families to determine what parenting classes, couples counseling, family preservation and reentry programs are provided at the correctional facility. Additionally, offering childcare to facilitate wife/partner prison visits, providing counseling and group support sessions for caregivers and also counseling and mentorship opportunities for children can be additional means of support.
- Counsel mothers/caregivers on understanding the benefits to their children of preserving a connection to their father. If contact visitations are not possible or frequent, other means of connecting can be suggested such as frequent phone calls, letter writing or even video conferencing.

Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights

A Bill of Rights for children of incarcerated parents developed by the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership.

<http://www.sfcipp.org/index.html>



Resources

Sesame Street Toolkit: Little Children Big Challenges Incarceration

Includes a video and children's books, as well as resources for caregivers.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/incarceration>

The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated: The Children of Incarcerated Parents Library

Provides information and resources for people serving children of prisoners and their caregivers.

<http://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/library/children-of-prisoners-library/>

The Osborne Association

A New York state based program providing a broad range of treatment, education, and vocational services to currently and formerly incarcerated men, women, children and families affected by the incarceration of a loved one.

<http://www.osborneny.org/about.cfm?pageID=1>

Conclusion

A child benefits in many ways from having his father (or a father figure) involved in his/her life in a positive, loving, nurturing, encouraging, and supportive manner. Children with involved fathers experience less poverty, behavioral problems and engagement in criminal activity, greater self-esteem, better educational outcomes and higher level cognitive and social skills. Fathers and mothers see benefits as well in the form of an enhanced emotional responsiveness, increased confidence and satisfaction from parenting and a better parent-child relationship. Federal, state, and community based agencies have established grants, and various fatherhood and parenting programs to support greater father involvement and improve couples co-parenting skills in an effort to see better outcomes in child well-being.

References

1. Bronte-Tinkew, J., Burkhauser, M., & Metz, A. (2012). Elements of promising practices in fatherhood programs: Evidenced-based research findings on interventions for fathers. *Fathering*, 10(1), 6-30.
2. Gordon, D.M., Hunter, B., Woods, L., Tinney, B., Bostic, B., Smith, A. (2012). Increasing Outreach, Connection, and Services to Low-Income, Non-Custodial Fathers: How Did We Get Here and What Do We Know. *Fathering*, 10(1), 101-111.
3. Smeeding, T.M., Garfinkel, I., & Mincy, R.B. (2011). *Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty, and Policy. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 635, 6-21.
4. Cowan, P.A., Cowan, C., Kline-Pruett, M., Pruett, K., & Wong, J.J. (2009). Promoting Fathers' Engagement with Children: Preventive Interventions for Low-Income Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71, 663-679.
5. Laughlin, L. (2014). A Child's Day: Living Arrangements, Nativity, and Family Transitions: 2011 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being). *U.S. Census Bureau: Current Population Reports*, 70-139.
6. Department of Health & Human Services. (2012). Information on Poverty and Income Statistics: A Summary of 2012 Current Population Survey Data. *ASPE Issue Brief*. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/information-poverty-and-income-statistics-summary-2012-current-population-survey-data>
7. Knox, V., Cowan, P.A., Cowan, C., & Bildner, E. (2011). Policies That Strengthen Fatherhood and Family Relationships: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 635, 216-239.
8. Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.) HMRF - Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood. Retrieved from <https://hmrfa.acf.hhs.gov/about-ofa/>.
9. Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.) About Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/about>.
10. Wood, L., & Lambin, E. (2013). *How Fathers and Father Figures Can Shape Child Health and Wellbeing*. The University of Western Australia: The Fathering Project.
11. Brooks, S. (2010). *Exploring the Bias Against Fathers in the Child Welfare System*. Davis, CA: UC Davis Extension - Center for Human Services, Northern California Training Academy.



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF

12. Allen, S. M., & Daly, K. J. (2007). *The effects of father involvement: An updated research summary of the evidence*. University of Guelph: Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being.
13. American Humane Association. (2011). Bringing Back the Dads: Changing Practices in Child Welfare Systems. *Protecting Children*, 26(2).
14. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). *Head Start Father Engagement Birth to Five Programming Guide*. Washington, D.C. : Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start.
15. Fleming, J., King, A., & Hunt, T. (2014). Just Call Me Dad: Health and Social Benefits to Fathers and Their Children. *Children Australia*, 39, 34–41.
16. Griffin, D. (2014.) What Do We Really Think About Fathers: Effectively Engaging Fathers. Griffin Recovery Enterprises.
17. What Do We Really Think About Fathers?: Effectively Engaging Fathers. s.l. : Griffin Recovery Enterprises, 2014.
18. McMahon, T.J., & Rounsaville, B.J. (2002). Substance Abuse and Fathering: Adding Poppa to the Research Agenda. *Addiction*, 97, 1109-1115.
19. Gordon, D.M., Oliveros, A., Hawes, S.W., Iwamoto, D.K., & Rayford, B.S. (2012). Engaging Fathers in Child Protection Services: A Review of Factors and Strategies Across Ecological Systems. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1399-1417.
20. Waller, M., & Swisher, R. (2006). Fathers' Risk Factors in Fragile Families: Implications for "Healthy" Relationships and Father Involvement. *Social Problems*, 53(3), 392-420.
21. Maxwell, N., Scourfield, J., Holland, S., Featherstone, B., & Lee, J. (2012). The Benefits and Challenges of Training Child Protection Social Workers in Father Engagement. *Child Abuse Review*, 21, 299-310.
22. Braswell, K. (2014). Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field. *National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse*. Retrieved from: <https://fatherhood.gov/toolkit/home>
23. Bronte-Tinkew, J., Horowitz, A., & Metz, A. (2009). "What Works" in Fatherhood Programs? Ten Lessons from Evidence-Based Practice. Gaithersburg, MD: National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.
24. Stahlschmidt, M.J., Threlfall, J., Seay, K.D., Lewis, E.M., & Kohl, P.L. (2013). Recruiting Fathers to Parenting Programs: Advice from Dads and Fatherhood Program Providers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35, 1734–1741.
25. CalSWEC - California Socialwork Education Center. (2015, August 27). Father Engagement and Father Involvement Toolkit: A Guide to Implementing, Monitoring, and Sustaining Innovative Practice: Engagement & Communication Tools. Retrieved from <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/father-engagement-and-father-involvement-toolkit-guide-implementing-monitoring-and-sustaining/engagement-communication-tools>.
26. Maxwell, N., Scourfield, J., Featherstone, B., Holland, S., & Tolman, R. (2012). Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Services: A Narrative Review of Recent Research Evidence. *Child and Family Social Work*, 17, 160-169.
27. Burwick, A. & Bellotti, J. (2005). Creating Paths to Father Involvement: Lessons from Early Head Start. Issue Brief #1. *Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.*
28. Martinson, K. & Nightingale, D. (2008). *Ten Key Findings from Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives*. The Urban Institute.
29. Martinez, K., Rider, F., Cayce, N., Forssell, S., Poirier, J., Hunt, S., Sawyer, J. (2013). *A Guide for Father Involvement in Systems of Care*. Washington, D.C.: Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health.
30. Coakley, T.M., Kelley, A., & Bartlett, R. (2014). Exploring Child Welfare Workers' Attitudes and Practice With Fathers. *Journal of Family Strengths*, 14, 11.
31. Campbell, C.A., Howard, D., Rayford, B.S., & Gordon, D.M. (2015). Fathers Matter: Involving and Engaging Fathers in the Child Welfare System Process. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 53, 84-91.
32. Brown, L., Callahan, M., Strega, S., Walmsley, C., & Dominelli, L. (2009). Manufacturing Ghost Fathers: The Paradox of Father Presence and Absence in Child Welfare. *Child and Family Social Work*, 14, 25-34.
33. Arria, A.M., Mericle, A.A., Rallo, D., Moe, J., White, W.L., Winters, K.C., & O'Connor, G. (2013). Integration of Parenting Skills Education and Interventions in Addiction Treatment. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, 7, 1-7.
34. McMahon, T.J., Winkel, J.D., & Rounsaville, B.J. (2007). Drug Abuse and Responsible Fathering: A Comparative Study of Men Enrolled in Methadone Maintenance Treatment. *Addiction*, 103(2), 269-283.
35. McMahon, T.J., Winkel, J.D., Suchman, N.E., & Rounsaville, B.J. (2007). Drug-Abusing Fathers: Patterns of Pair-Bonding, Reproduction, and Paternal Involvement. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 33, 295-302.



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF

36. Stover, C., Hall, C., McMahon, T.J., & Easton, C. (2012). Fathers Entering Substance Abuse Treatment: An Examination of Substance Abuse, Trauma Symptoms and Parenting Behaviors. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 43, 335-343.
37. Sanders, M. (2009). Fatherhood and Recovery. *The Source*, 19.
38. Herman-Stahl, M., Kan, M.L., & McKay, T. (2008.) Incarceration and the Family: A Review of Research and Promising Approaches for Serving Fathers and Families. *Research Triangle Park: RTI International*.
39. Krupat, T., Gaynes, E., & Lincroft, Y. (2011). *A Call to Action: Safeguarding New York's Children of Incarcerated Parents*. Bronx, NY: The Osborne Association.
40. Commission, Joint State Government. (2011). *The Effects of Parental Incarceration on Children: Needs and Responsive Services*. Harrisburg, PA: General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission.
41. Panter-Brick, C., Burgess, A., Eggerman, M., McAllister, F., Pruett, K., & Leckman, J. (2014). Practioner Review: Engaging Fathers - Recommendations for a Game Change in Parenting Interventions Based on a Systematic Review of the Global Evidence. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55, 1187-1212.



The National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center's mission is to enhance the quality of social and health services delivered to children who are abandoned or at risk of abandonment due to the presence of drugs and/or HIV in the family by providing training, information, support, and resources to service providers who assist these children and their families. The Resource Center is located at the University of California at Berkeley, and is a service of the Children's Bureau.

AUTHOR:
Brenda Farrell, MPA,
National AIA Resource Center

